

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

PUBLIC SCOPING HEARING

Taken on: Thursday, September 9, 2004
6:30 p.m. - 8:05 p.m.

Location: Hilton San Diego
901 Camino del Rio South
San Diego, California 92110

Reported by: Linda E. Bennett
CSR No. 11874

Public Scoping Hearing for the Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management, taken before Linda E. Bennett, a Certified Shorthand Reporter for the State of California, with principal office in the County of San Diego, commencing at 6:58 p.m., Thursday, September 9, 2004, at San Diego Hilton Mission Valley, 901 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, California.

APPEARANCES OF BLM STAFF:

Dave Frink
Dallas Meeks
John Johnson
Lynette Elser
Gary Taylor
Daniel Steward
Robert Haggerty
Robert Bower
Chris Knauf

PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

Jerry Allen
Richard Palmer
David Hogan
Kim Marsden
Larry Klaasen
Charles Anderson
Geoffrey Smith
Kelly Fuller
Byron Anderson
Janet McGarvie
John Degenfelder
Cindy Burrascano
Philip Pryde
Mike Brewster
Terry Weiner

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, September 9, 2004

6:58 p.m.

MR. THOMSEN: Good evening. Can you hear okay
in the back? No?

How about if we turn the mic on. Is that
better? Good. Okay. We'll use the people in the back
as our sounding board back there. Can you hear okay
back there?

Thank you all for coming out tonight. It's
nice to see a good mix of people out in the audience,
some familiar faces and some new ones. I'm Greg
Thomsen. I have most recently transferred to the
California Desert District Office Moreno Valley as
program manager for the last five years. In the summer
I have been the manager in El Centro field office. So
I came down to help out tonight since there is not a
current manager in that office.

What we're doing tonight is we're starting
the works. This is the second night of two nights of
scoping meetings to start writing a new resource
management plan for the eastern San Diego County
planning area. The plan that our office has been
managed under is a 1981 version, so you can imagine

1 it's outdated in several respects, and it needs to be
2 revised. So this is a key part of getting that process
3 started.

4 In writing the new plan, we're going to be
5 looking at what should be the management objectives to
6 manage this area. It's about a hundred thousand acres
7 in the eastern San Diego County area, and hopefully you
8 have had a chance to look at it on the maps in the
9 back.

10 This is a special area in the sense there's
11 quite a variety of potential land uses and values out
12 there. There are two areas of critical environmental
13 concern. There's some developed campground and
14 off-highway vehicle area. There are two designated
15 wilderness areas as well as several wilderness study
16 areas. There's also a series of livestock grazing
17 allotments, and there are a number of endangered
18 species that have habitat in the planning area.

19 So this plan will make decisions on how to
20 manage all of these resources. It also will designate
21 the area for off-road vehicle management. The area was
22 never formally designated routes in this area. We did
23 start a process to do that in 1997, but that wasn't
24 completed, so this new plan will designate routes in
25 this planning area. It's either open, limited or

1 closed to vehicle use. So we certainly would like your
2 input on that.

3 We completed -- some of you are involved in a
4 similar effort on what we called the western Colorado
5 planning area, which is down in the Imperial Valley
6 desert areas, and we did a route designation process
7 for that area, completed it almost two years ago. And
8 one of the things that we heard from the public scoping
9 was that we should use the 1980 route system as our
10 base route map for that map planning area. So one of
11 the things that we're going to want to hear from you is
12 what directions you think we ought to take regarding
13 the route inventory or other aspects of embarking on
14 route designation for the eastern San Diego planning
15 area.

16 Like I have been trying to say is that we are
17 here mainly tonight to hear from you. We really want
18 to know what your values are for this area, what your
19 concerns are, what you think should be addressed in
20 this plan, because they will be reflected in how the
21 plan turns out.

22 We're in the middle of the public scoping
23 period. It formally closes on October 12th. And you
24 have a variety of ways to provide comments to BLM. One
25 is through hearings like this tonight. Another is in

1 writing and also through e-mail, and there's
2 information on how to do that, I believe, in the
3 handouts that you received as you signed in.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There isn't.

5 MR. THOMSEN: There isn't? Okay. See what
6 can we do to -- tell you what we'll do, one of the
7 things that came up in the premeeting tonight was there
8 was a question from some of you as to why we're working
9 on the mailing list. And we tried to put together an
10 extensive mailing list from a national database, and
11 obviously we missed some of you. So it's really
12 important that you are here tonight so that you'll be on
13 the mailing list and based on that, we could provide
14 information tonight so you don't lose any time. We'll
15 have it at the desk as to how you can submit your
16 comments as far as e-mail or in writing.

17 But also please make sure you sign up so that
18 you are on our formal mailing list, and if you know
19 somebody else that probably wants to be involved but
20 maybe also was not on the list, please have them
21 contact us.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is there a Web site and
23 e-mail address and Web page?

24 MS. ELSER: If you go to www.ca.blm.gov and
25 over at the left-hand side there will be a list of

1 different things that you can click on. One of them
2 will be field offices. If you go to field office for El
3 Centro, there will be a notice of public meetings, and
4 on that notice of public meetings, it has a Web address
5 and it also has the address that you can mail things to.

6 If you would like, we will try to during this
7 meeting get this flyer photocopied from the hotel. I'm
8 not sure if we can do it, but hopefully we'll be able
9 to photocopy it here tonight and have some at the back
10 counter.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Would you repeat the
12 address again, please.

13 MS. ELSER: Ca.blm.gov. If you want to e-mail
14 in the comments, they would go to me, which is E-L-S-E-R
15 elser@ca.blm.gov, or address is 1661 South Fourth
16 Street, El Centro, California 92243. And what we will
17 do is we will take the mailing list of everybody who
18 signed in tonight and we will send you a postcard within
19 the next few days. Early next week we'll mail it. That
20 will also have the address and the e-mail address so
21 that you can send in written comments, because we do
22 want you to participate and we want you to have the
23 opportunity to have the right information to e-mail in
24 or mail in comments.

25 MR. THOMSEN: Thanks.

1 Okay. At this point, what I would like to do
2 is to turn the mic over to Gary Taylor. He's our
3 environmental coordinator, and he will explain what the
4 process is and how this applies to the planning
5 process.

6 MR. TAYLOR: I would like to welcome you all
7 here tonight and thank you for coming out.

8 The reason we're meeting here is to invite
9 you and help you to determine the scope of issues and
10 address and identify these signature issues relating to
11 the Eastern San Diego Resource Management Plan. As we
12 have already discussed, the plan is over 20 years old
13 and is in need of updating. And when we're finished,
14 what we have will replace this plan in its entirety.

15 The first phase of the NEPA process, which
16 we're in right now, is called scoping where we receive
17 comments from you that we'll integrate into the
18 resource management plan. That is to be written. It's
19 really important if we get your input up front before
20 we put pen to paper so then we can start on the right
21 direction, and after we get the draft out, then we
22 won't have to change directions.

23 When we write the draft plan, we'll request
24 comments on this draft plan, and these comments will be
25 incorporated into the final resource plan. After the

1 final resource plan is released, if you're still not
2 satisfied, you have 30 days to protest the plan. And
3 then after we receive all of the protests and we
4 resolve them, then we'll issue a decision about the
5 plan.

6 So remember, the main purpose of this meeting
7 is to gather information from you and the things that
8 interest you. You are a key part of this process and
9 we really value hearing from you. We'd like to make --
10 we would like you to make specific comments on any
11 updates you would like to see in the plan. So thanks
12 again for coming, and we look forward to hearing your
13 comments.

14 MR. FRINK: Can you hear me in the back all
15 right?

16 My name is David Frink. I'm with the BLM in
17 the Barstow office, and I'm down here to help this --
18 get this proceeding underway. And we have a little bit
19 of housekeeping that needs to be done first. Up here
20 on the chart you'll see our ground rules for meeting.
21 And this is to ensure that everyone gets a fair chance
22 to voice their concerns. There are copies of that, I
23 believe, on the back table on the yellow forms. If you
24 want to pick one up and see what the ground rules are,
25 you can get them right there at the table.

1 We do have a court reporter here for formal
2 record. She's over here at the table. Thank you very
3 much.

4 Transcripts will be available in hard copy
5 upon request. And I understand that there also will be
6 a transcript posted on the Web site that you already
7 have the address for.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What kind of time frame
9 for the transcript?

10 MR. FRINK: It sounds like several weeks
11 turnaround time.

12 Okay. As we have already stated, the purpose
13 of the hearing is to hear your concerns. That is the
14 primary purpose of the meeting, and to make sure that
15 everyone has a chance to state the concerns that they
16 may have about this planning process and some of the
17 issues that it raises within the time frames that we
18 have available and this meeting is scheduled to end at
19 8:30. And I would assume that that would be the end of
20 the formal session; however, I'm informed that the BLM
21 people will be around after the meeting to discuss any
22 other questions that you might have that don't get
23 raised in some other format.

24 If you need information of a procedural
25 nature, that is, technical questions, for instance, if

1 you need contact information as far as mailing
2 addresses like we just talked about the Web address or
3 if you need to understand BLM's planning process
4 because you haven't been in contact with it before,
5 we'll certainly be able to answer those questions after
6 the meeting, but we don't want to take up the formal
7 period with that kind of material. So if you'll just
8 hold those questions until after the formal session, we
9 can address them then.

10 Conversations in the audience. We have had
11 some meetings in the past where conversations tended to
12 subtract from everyone's benefit. So if you would
13 please hold your comments until afterwards, and that
14 way we will be respectful of everyone's point of view
15 and the comments that they would like to make.

16 Speakers will have a five-minute time limit.
17 And one of my purposes here is to waive this yellow
18 sheet of paper in the air when speakers have reached
19 the four-and-a-half-minute mark, and that lets you have
20 30 seconds to wrap up your thoughts on the topics and
21 the issues of concern that you may have.

22 If you would like to speak tonight, there are
23 green forms on the back table. We would appreciate it
24 very much if you want to speak, to go ahead and pick up
25 one or more of those forms, fill them out, and hold it

1 up in the air and someone from BLM will come around and
2 pick it up before you speak. I am under the impression
3 that those forms can be used if you have questions or
4 concerns that you'd rather not speak directly about
5 here. And we'll pick those forms up and integrate that
6 information also into our planning process.

7 After everyone has had an opportunity to
8 speak, if we have extra time left over at the end of
9 the session, people who have already spoken and feel
10 they would like to add to their statement will
11 certainly be allowed to do so. If there are no
12 questions right now, we can proceed with having the
13 speakers fill out the forms and get underway.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes. Is the original
15 current plan available?

16 MR. FRINK: The original plan looks like this.
17 Do we have extra copies available for people who
18 request?

19 MR. TAYLOR: No, it's not online. It was
20 precomputer days almost, in the early '80s, so we have
21 very limited copies. If you want to come to me
22 afterwards, I would see about getting you a copy.

23 MR. FRINK: Did everyone hear that? There are
24 a few copies of this available, but they have been
25 around since 1981, so there aren't a lot of them left.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I would suggest you
2 could either scan it and publish it on the Web site.

3 MR. FRINK: That's certainly a thought. We'll
4 take that under consideration.

5 Okay, people who would like to speak, go
6 ahead and fill out the forms and we'll get underway.
7 When you come forward to the microphone, please state
8 your name before you begin making any comments. We
9 would appreciate that.

10 We have a short list of people who would like
11 to speak. If you -- if in the process of people coming
12 up and speaking it raises some concerns that you may
13 have or some questions, then certainly feel free to go
14 ahead and fill out one of those forms, and that
15 opportunity will remain available.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

17 MR. FRINK: If I understood the question
18 correctly, there was a question as to whether or not
19 this microphone here is to be used?

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I would like to know
21 who these people are, your cohorts.

22 MR. MEEKS: My name is Dallas Meeks. I'm a
23 senior planner for the El Centro building, and I work
24 with recreation.

25 MR. BOWER: I'm Bob Bower. I'm normally the

1 information resource specialist, but due to a shortage
2 of staff in our office, I'm currently acting as the
3 staff geologist.

4 MR. HAGGERTY: Bob Haggerty, I'm the duly
5 acting chief ranger for the BLM field office.

6 MR. TAYLOR: And as I stated before, I am Gary
7 Taylor. I'm the NEPA coordinator.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What was that? No,
9 acronym.

10 MR. TAYLOR: NEPA is National Environmental
11 Policy Act. Everything that we do has to be coordinated
12 as outlined in this act, so it's a pretty intensive job
13 sometimes.

14 MS. ELSER: Lynette Elser, the resources staff
15 chief.

16 MR. KNAUF: Chris Knauf, project manager at
17 the BLM office.

18 MR. STEWARD: I'm Daniel Steward. I'm the
19 wildlife biologist of the El Centro office.

20 MR. FRINK: Okay. With that, we have several
21 people that have already identified they would like to
22 speak. And the first one -- when we do this, if you
23 would -- I will mention your name, but if you could
24 identify yourself and spell your name so that the court
25 reporter will make sure that she gets the information

1 down correctly. So if you will come forward to the mic
2 when you are called. The first person is Jerry Allen.

3 MR. ALLEN: Is this on now? Make sure it's
4 on. First of all, I would like to thank the panel for
5 coming over the hill tonight to hear what we have to
6 say. We appreciate having your input here. I'm a
7 relatively new member of San Diego. Jerry Allen is my
8 name, J-E-R-R-Y, A-L-L-E-N.

9 I am a new resident of San Diego, so I have
10 not much knowledge of the specifics of the area. But I
11 do have a couple general comments that I would like to
12 make for the panel. One -- first of all, it deals with
13 the salt cedar control question. I noticed the BLM
14 recently signed a memorandum of understanding with
15 several other agencies recognizing the salt cedar
16 problem as such a critical issue in this area. So I
17 would expect that the plan would outline an aggressive
18 proposal to deal with this whole cedar question, and by
19 that I mean using all means possible and available to
20 you, including chemical means.

21 Second of all, there are -- there is a
22 cooperative wildlife management area in this particular
23 planning unit. I understand there's several species of
24 concern and threatened endangered species there, and
25 those species tend to drive the planning process and

1 allotting land. I would just hope that the agency
2 would remember that there are other people and other
3 wildlife species out there that are important to people
4 in the county, particularly I'm talking about the deer,
5 quail, et cetera. So I hope that's at least addressed
6 in the plan. I noticed just looking at some of the
7 recent forest works, some of those species were not
8 even discussed in some of their planning.

9 Third, it seems we have a pocket reaction
10 nowadays to limit or close roads to a significant
11 amount of road closure area. I would simply caution
12 the agency to be careful in terms of the numbers and
13 announce the road closures and close road and close
14 access. That means you have limited your management
15 activities, your management options to a great degree.
16 So I would simply say be very careful in closing roads
17 to the area because of what you do to your future
18 management of the areas to get into that area and do
19 things.

20 Lastly, it's along the same lines, I notice
21 there are a couple of new wilderness designations
22 again. I would suggest that new wilderness be given
23 careful consideration. Once an area is designated
24 federal wilderness, again it limits your access and
25 limits the options that you have to manage the

1 vegetation in that area. A lot of us would like to
2 think about the wilderness area, that is preserving
3 that forever. I know that most us know that is not
4 true. You have to manage the areas to keep them in a
5 state that we think they should be in or that we want.

6 Okay. So those are the four points I have,
7 and thanks a million for your time.

8 MR. FRINK: Thank you.

9 MR. THOMSEN: Next, Richard Palmer. And the
10 next person after Richard will be David Hogan.

11 MR. PALMER: Thank you for having giving me
12 notice here this evening. My name is Richard Palmer,
13 P-A-L-M-E-R.

14 I have a number of -- I have a ranch in
15 McCain Valley, very close to your Cottonwood Camp and
16 various things I see in that area. We need to address
17 the restoration of fences in the grazing allotments.
18 That occurs for two reasons. As you well know, if
19 you're redefining the grazing areas, that will require
20 some intense changing, but in addition, we have had
21 some fires back there about three years ago and there
22 were quite a bit of fences that burned down and were
23 cut. And there's a lot of fencing there that needs to
24 be restored.

25 Second thing is property identification. We

1 get a lot of Cottonwood Camp visitors, hunters, illegal
2 aliens, off-roaders that come through the property as
3 if it's all BLM land. They don't know the difference.
4 And while I understand I should post my property, which
5 I do, there's also the fact that the fences are down,
6 the fact that state hunting brochures as well as BLM
7 maps don't always show where the private property is.
8 And it -- they are hunting and they are not on a road
9 and they come up to your fence, frequently it's cut and
10 gone through. And if we could put the private
11 property -- or indicate private property on hunting
12 maps as well as anything from the BLM, it would be of
13 great help.

14 Then there's -- I'm going to hunting and
15 hunters. The -- we have quite a few hunters out there,
16 and the signs read legal -- you can take game legally
17 in season but no target practice. Well, those signs
18 are shot up. And there's another subject of target
19 practice.

20 But I would think that you would want to
21 restrict hunting in your critical habitat with the big
22 horn sheep. That area is quite heavily hunted during
23 deer season. And I -- I know this because they come
24 through -- I'm immediately east of Cottonwood. And
25 they come through my place in droves to -- because it's

1 a good shortcut, they tell me. Well, I have roads and
2 no pastures, so it's convenient. Okay.

3 BLM signage, it's well shot up. And I have
4 replanted the BLM signs on my road I would say four
5 times in the last two or three months. So I keep
6 finding them pulled up, and I don't know who does this.
7 And I'm trying anyway.

8 There's a problem with illegal aliens back
9 there. They use Cottonwood Camp as a rest stop and a
10 staging area. There's -- it's created vandalism and
11 theft on my place, and I'm sure it would be in the camp
12 as well. And I don't know if anybody can speak to
13 that.

14 I have -- I'm telling you this, not that you
15 maybe are unaware, but you'd be amazed because the
16 border patrol was totally unaware. I did make them
17 aware.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. JOHNSON: Thanks.

20 Next speaker is David Hogan. Following Hogan
21 would be Kim Marsden.

22 MR. HOGAN: Good evening. My name is David
23 Hogan, H-O-G-A-N. I'm here tonight representing
24 several thousand members of the Center for Biological
25 Adversity. And one of the main comments I want to make

1 about the framework management plan, that we would
2 really like to see a general emphasis on natural
3 resource protection and passive recreation as a general
4 plan and then work from there.

5 On specific point, one of the things we would
6 like to see is unlike, unfortunately, the past plan had
7 very little information, we would like to see the new
8 plan contain as much information as possible on
9 specific species and locations, potential habitat for
10 sensitive species, critical habitat areas, areas
11 identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as
12 recover units for the Quino checkerspot butterfly.
13 Please compile as much information as you can and
14 include that in the plan and put it in your management
15 decisions.

16 One place it helps us is for the national
17 database of the State of California. Other measures we
18 would like to see is generally minimize special impact
19 of infrequent habitat, and that's going to necessitate
20 a formal endangered species.

21 On the total plan with the framework plan as
22 programmatic document, we would also like to see a
23 comment from the BLM towards to specific (inaudible)
24 for. Many times in the past, of course, there's been
25 situations where you do projects in Colorado without

1 those kinds of surveys.

2 And very specifically, we would like to see
3 grazing discontinue.

4 Another issue we would like to see is the
5 maintenance of wilderness quality land as wilderness
6 quality land in the San Ysidro Mountains, San Felipe
7 Hills and in the Sawtooth Mountains and Table Mountain.
8 We would like to see those maintained either as
9 wilderness study areas or as multiple use Class C. If
10 you can't maintain those conditions, and those
11 classifications, we would very much like to see those
12 identified for protective disposal. I'm sure there are
13 other entities we can find to take care of those lands
14 in their largely natural state.

15 Another issue that's come up, obviously more
16 recently, is minimization of impacts from overly
17 frequent fire. What we're starting to see in many
18 areas of San Diego County, especially in areas from the
19 mountains west, areas where there's been too much fire.
20 I don't know if this is the case in many areas in the
21 San Diego plan because I don't know what the fire
22 history is in many of those areas, but in areas in
23 closer proximity to the coast, specifically Otay
24 Mountains and wilderness, those areas have been burned
25 57 times in the last several decades, which is fire

1 frequency that the fire exceeds natural fire frequency
2 and is, in fact, resulting in a type diversion of a
3 sensitive native habitat.

4 So we just urge you before you do any kind of
5 prescribed fire, please analyze the conditions of that
6 area and determine if there's been recent fire in that
7 area, and if it's not appropriate, if there's an area
8 that has fire, it states prescribed fire risk is also
9 not appropriate. All of these things, prescribed fire,
10 could exacerbate the conditions of overly frequent
11 fire.

12 Another issue I would like to bring up is the
13 ongoing need to reconcile some ongoing management
14 issues with special status species conservation. For
15 example, in Lark Canyon with the off-road vehicle area,
16 there's never been any NEPA document for that area as
17 far as I have been able to tell from research with your
18 office.

19 There's also never been any Endangered
20 Species Act formal consultation on that area. Those
21 things are necessary as part of this process if
22 off-road vehicle management is going to continue in
23 Lark Canyon.

24 Some other examples are analysis of
25 endangered species issues and grazing allotment in

1 McCain Valley with regard to the Quino checkerspot
2 butterfly and areas that have been identified as
3 eastern recovery area and also critical habitat in the
4 area. We need to know where those things overlap and
5 what the issues are.

6 There also needs to be the ESA consultation
7 on the Lark Canyon off-road vehicle area and the active
8 grazing allotment, and then lastly, it's really
9 crucial, it could be years until this plan is
10 finalized, and until that time we just ask that you
11 implement what you call the interim measures you
12 identify in the 2001 biological evaluation on
13 endangered species issues. Those were reconfigured
14 allotments of big horn sheep to exclude the big horn
15 habitat, conduct an endangered species survey absent
16 all habitat, initiate efforts to control species and
17 purchase big horn habitat.

18 As far as I can tell from my research, none
19 of those things have been done. I understand staffing
20 issues, I understand funding, but those things can be
21 made a priority. Thanks for listening.

22 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

23 Next is Kim Marsden, and following Kim will
24 be Larry Klaasen.

25 MS. MARSDEN: Good evening. My name is Kim

1 Marsden. I work for the California State Parks. I'm a
2 resource psychologist for the Colorado Desert District.
3 M-A-R-S-D-E-N.

4 And as you know, there's a lot of overlapping
5 or anastomosing land through the area between parks and
6 BLM and, like, little, tiny pieces that are adjacent,
7 and I think one of our concerns is access to those
8 pieces and whether that's going to be provided through
9 parkland and all of that.

10 The other thing is, like, maybe smoothing out
11 some of those boundaries, address trading the lands to
12 make those boundaries more contiguous, and to address
13 the effects related to endangered species and things
14 like that.

15 And the other thing that I wanted to mention
16 was the grazing allotments and their seemingly
17 overlappingness with critical habitat. And I would
18 like you guys in this process to look at those grazing
19 allotments critically and evaluate them for their
20 usefulness in the future with regard to monetary gain
21 or whatever, because they just seem to be very marginal
22 out in that area. So I would like that to be something
23 that is in the plan.

24 And those are the three things that I wanted
25 to just mention, and I will have more in writing I'm

1 sure. Thank you.

2 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

3 Next is Larry Klaasen, and after Larry is
4 Charles Anderson.

5 MR. KLAASEN: Yes. Larry Klaasen, Sierra
6 Club. Last name K-L-A-A-S-E-N.

7 One of the items I would like to address is
8 exotic plant removal, particularly in the wilderness,
9 but also the surrounding areas from the wilderness
10 areas that would be intruding in particular tamarisks
11 or salt cedar and the canyon riparian areas have a
12 significant impact on water use and big horn sheep
13 habitat.

14 There's some target shooting referred to in
15 McCain Valley, but also particularly in Table Mountain
16 area, that is going on. It's making that particular
17 area very unfriendly to anybody who doesn't have a gun
18 or bulletproof vest. And that area needs to be
19 enforced and/or a specific area set up for target
20 shooting that will be a controlled area. This also
21 occurs outside of the east San Diego area in the BLM
22 controlled areas too. Those were the two items I had.
23 Thank you.

24 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Okay. Charles
25 Anderson and after Charles Anderson, Geoff Smith.

1 MR. ANDERSON: Hi, my name is Charles
2 Anderson, and I wanted to echo a couple things I heard
3 down here tonight that occurred to me. One of them is
4 minimizing impact to critical environment. I think
5 that's really important. Diversity is really important
6 to San Diego County. San Diego County is growing very,
7 very fast. And the inherent valley of San Diego County
8 is not pragmatic in the normal sense, in the sense that
9 what can be revealed and what it can yield to people.
10 But it's innate value, pristine quality.

11 I spent a lot of time in the natural
12 wilderness area, and as San Diego grows, the value of
13 that natural wilderness area will increase tremendously
14 because there'll be extreme contrast to the city
15 environment. And when I'm out there, I see a lot of
16 indigenous people, historical sites, and people that I
17 have never seen before. For instance, I find a lot of
18 tools and spear points and Indian sites. I don't know
19 if they are recorded or not, but when you turn over the
20 artifacts, you can tell it's very, very old. It's
21 never been primarily picked up before.

22 And I'm really kind of antioff-road use or
23 expand the off-road use because there's a lot of
24 paraphernalia that goes on both in Borrego and in BLM.
25 I spent a lot of time in the Valley of the Moon. I

1 know that's not up here tonight, but when I go there
2 and I see a lot of off-roadies, I see a lot of beer
3 cans and beer bottles, and it's kind of a state of
4 disrespect for the environment. And I think that once
5 established -- right now off-road use is great, but I
6 don't think it should be furthered. I think
7 established roads are fine. I think it shouldn't go
8 any farther than that.

9 As far as development, development for paving
10 or any more roads or any more routes available, I think
11 it should be only for putting up kiosks or educating
12 the people or allowing the access so people can support
13 the environment. When they go out there and find
14 what's out there, they can appreciate that issues come
15 up and they can vote towards that. And when I go out
16 in the area, I don't find a lot of maintenance. I find
17 a lot of -- one person out here had mentioned target
18 practice. I find a lot of shells and target practice.
19 I find a lot of trashed areas. People generally shoot
20 them up and leave them out there.

21 So it's fine to have those particular areas,
22 but they should be really regulated because what
23 happens is when you have a particular area that people
24 do target shooting at, they expand and it goes in
25 circles and grows and grows, same with off-road use

1 too.

2 So basically, just to sum it all up,
3 biological diversity is very important. Critical
4 impact for those particular environments to support
5 endangered species is very important, and just the
6 value of land itself as a wilderness area has an innate
7 value, just as the land itself, just to go out there
8 and explore and enjoy it as a historical record for
9 San Diego County, I think that should be preserved at
10 all costs. Thank you for your time.

11 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

12 Next is Geoffrey Smith. And following that
13 will be Kelly Fuller.

14 MR. SMITH: Thank you all. Hi. Thanks for
15 coming to our city. Bet you can't wait to get back to
16 the desert, right, those of you who live out there.

17 My name is Geoffrey Smith. First name is
18 G-E-O-F-F-R-E-Y, last name S-M-I-T-H.

19 I'm here representing three organizations,
20 first of all, the California Wild Heritage Campaign,
21 for which I'm the San Diego organizer; the Desert
22 Protective Council, for which I am Imperial County
23 project director; and the San Diego Fire Recovery
24 Network based here in San Diego.

25 The first point concerns wilderness and

1 wilderness study areas. For some 20 years now I have
2 been working with legions of volunteers in San Diego
3 and surrounding areas to protect areas that are
4 suitable for wilderness. And in some cases we've been
5 successful in establishing wilderness. Currently, in
6 the region under consideration there are a number of
7 wilderness study areas. I'm calling your attention to
8 the San Ysidro Mountains, San Felipe Hills, Table
9 Mountain, as well as the Sawtooth Mountains and Carizzo
10 Mountains, the latter two being included in the current
11 legislation of the California Wild Heritage Act under
12 Boxer's bill.

13 The point of this discussion is to implore
14 you to continue to manage these wilderness study areas
15 as wilderness as is your mandate. They may not have
16 the wilderness designation, but you are mandated to
17 manage them in that way. I can assure you they are in
18 every way suitable and eligible for wilderness
19 designation and we will get there.

20 Secondly, I would ask you to enforce these
21 wilderness boundaries, both existing wilderness and
22 proposed wilderness, wilderness study areas, by
23 specifically disallowing the use of mechanized vehicles
24 and strictly enforcing these policies. Especially in
25 the designated wilderness areas you need to increase

1 your staff and make that a priority, managing the
2 wilderness areas that we have.

3 Third point would be manage the wild land of
4 that country, wild areas for resource protection, not
5 for home protection as a priority. You know, to the
6 extent that we have responsibilities, you have a
7 responsibility as an agency to safeguard human health
8 and safety that we -- I admit that and that is an
9 important issue.

10 But homes that are improperly located in
11 remote areas should not warrant excessive clearing of
12 vegetation or construction of roads for the purpose of
13 protecting the structure. They should know going into
14 an area that they are at risk of fire and they
15 shouldn't try to subdue the wild land in order to
16 ensure their own safety and protection. And to the
17 extent that an agency can enforce that, I would
18 encourage you to do that.

19 Another point would be to actively seek land
20 and water conservation funding for sensitive land
21 located adjacent to and within wilderness study areas
22 and existing wilderness areas. This -- this is a
23 substantial sum of money that you as an agency can
24 apply for. And I encourage you to prioritize land
25 acquisitions giving emphasis to critical habitat as

1 well as wilderness areas. Also encourage you to work
2 with many and numerous land agencies -- land
3 conservancies and trusts, and you know the names. They
4 are out there willing to work with you.

5 Finally, the -- of all of the animal species
6 that roam out there, I think one of the most
7 charismatic megafauna is the Peninsula Big Horn sheep,
8 and we would encourage you to continue to provide as
9 much protection for that animal in its critical habitat
10 as possible. In particular, I would ask that all
11 cattle grazing be eliminated in the critical habitat
12 for Peninsula Big Horn sheep.

13 So in summary, as the population of San Diego
14 County increases at an alarming rate, the demands being
15 placed on our back country are also going to increase.
16 I'm asking for increased management and increased
17 protection rather than increased loosening of
18 protections in response to those increasing pressures,
19 if that makes sense. The more people we have, the more
20 we need to have these places set aside in their natural
21 state. And I would encourage you to see to it that
22 that's done.

23 Thank you very much for your time.

24 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

25 Kelly Fuller followed by -- let me put my

1 glasses on here -- Byron Anderson.

2 MS. FULLER: I'm Kelly Fuller, K-E-L-L-Y,
3 F-U-L-L-E-R.

4 Like many of the speakers, I am very
5 concerned about the wilderness areas but especially the
6 wilderness study areas. I understand that a number of
7 them are probably going to lose their status because
8 they are small. And if they do lose the wilderness
9 study area status, I do not think that any of them
10 should be managed as multiuse M. They should be
11 multiuse C or some kind of very good protective status
12 for them, especially if the only reason they are losing
13 the status is just because of size.

14 I have special concern for the Table Mountain
15 area, both the WSA and the ACEC. There are tremendous
16 cultural resources out there as well as Table Mountain
17 itself being a traditional Kumiai sacred site. And I
18 have experienced hiking out there. And, frankly, it's
19 frightening sometimes being in that area because there
20 is so much target shooting going on and it's often hard
21 to let the target shooters know where you are because
22 they have protective hearing stuff on. And I know
23 people who are afraid to hike out there. They won't
24 hike or camp there, so therefore, they are being driven
25 out. So therefore, I would like to see the target

1 shooting being more controlled in that area so it's
2 clearer that there are safe places to be.

3 Besides the sacred site areas at Table
4 Mountain, there are sacred site areas at McCain Valley.
5 I would like to see any area that's known to be an
6 Indian sacred site to have no RV use there.

7 And that sums up the comments that I have.
8 Thank you very much.

9 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

10 Okay. Byron Anderson followed by Janet
11 McGarvie.

12 MR. ANDERSON: My name is Byron Anderson,
13 spelled B-Y-R-O-N, Anderson with an O-N.

14 I've heard a lot of good comments tonight I
15 think. I'm in agreement with most of them. I'm
16 interested in the preservation of land for endangered
17 species and for wilderness characteristics and these
18 types of things. But I'm going to kind of constrain my
19 speaking this evening to one specific area, and that's
20 McCain Valley.

21 We have already heard somebody talk about
22 McCain Valley who owns a ranch there. I do a lot of
23 recreating out there, certain amount of four-wheel
24 driving, a lot of hiking, some camping. I do respect
25 signs. I don't tear them up. I don't cut down fences.

1 And I don't believe in shooting really, at least not at
2 this point.

3 Anyway, getting back to the real point I want
4 to make, dealing with the consolidation of boundaries,
5 the consolidation of property ownership, specifically
6 there's a large ranch currently for sale down at the
7 south end of McCain Valley. I don't remember the name
8 of it. It's something like 2100 acres or something in
9 that order of magnitude. And I would really like to
10 encourage the BLM to do what they can to acquire that
11 ranch because it will make a very important
12 consolidation of the lands for recreation, for -- if
13 it's appropriate for hunting, for whatever.

14 I know there's cultural resources, things of
15 that nature in that area. I would also encourage you
16 to consider, you know, other amalgamation of ownership
17 parcels throughout that entire McCain Valley area.
18 That's a very important area for recreation, and that's
19 the point I want to make. Thank you for listening.

20 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

21 Okay. Janet McGarvie followed by John
22 Degenfelder.

23 MS. MCGARVIE: Good evening. My name is
24 Janet, J-A-N-E-T, M-C-G-A-R-V-I-E. I'm here to
25 represent San Diego Off-Road Coalition, and I am a

1 former state commissioner of off-highway recreation for
2 the State of California.

3 I wanted to point out that we recently
4 completed a study which shows that one in every 18
5 homes in San Diego County is owners of off-road
6 vehicles. That's a tremendous number of people who
7 need a place to recreate. We currently have a small
8 area on the Cleveland National Forest called Corral
9 Canyon, and we have a small area there at McCain, so
10 those are two closest areas without going out to the
11 desert. It provides an opportunity for our people to
12 be able to put their machines in the back of their
13 truck or take their Jeep, go out for a quick trip, not
14 have to spend a whole weekend and a lot of gas money
15 and a lot of time to go out to the desert.

16 I also wanted to say that in the route
17 designation, we want to be sure that current
18 information with the GPSing program is completed and
19 that we do not end up with a lot of cheap homes, cherry
20 stems. The current map indicates that now. And I know
21 that that's not a complete new map.

22 We would like to include the word litigation.
23 We want to be able to have a new road or a new trail
24 provided if you are going to take one away. Just like
25 any other mitigation for anything else, we should have

1 mitigation also. So let's make sure we include that
2 word in our plan.

3 There are currently in the State of
4 California 14,085,000 acres of wilderness. The
5 off-road community thinks that maybe this might be
6 enough right now. We'd like you to look at those WSAs
7 and, evaluate them because the legislature that
8 established them said that you would do that and it has
9 not been done as far as we know.

10 We would like you to be sure to consider
11 public access to our public land because we as
12 taxpayers have a right to use these lands too.

13 We would like to see you place the human
14 species at the top of the species list. Thank you.

15 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

16 Okay. John Degenfelder and following John
17 will be Cindy, what is it, Burrascano. Thank you.

18 MR. DEGENFELDER: The difficult names are
19 coming up. David D-E-G-E-N-F-E-L-D-E-R.

20 Thank you. I live in Ramona. We have a
21 group called Ramona Trail Association. We actually
22 build trails and maintain trails, and we'd like to see
23 signage on your trails and perhaps have more areas
24 where we are marked and stay off areas where we are not
25 supposed to go. Some places where the

1 environmentalists are more sensitive and so forth, we
2 would like to know where that is and also some staging
3 areas, some camping areas so they are marked plain
4 enough.

5 And I'm an equestrian. We need a few
6 corrals, perhaps, or at least some areas where we can
7 fence off to or tie. We can do those kinds of things.
8 If you need any help, I think that we're retired, we'd
9 like to volunteer for maybe patrol where you need to,
10 people that have to have more corrective ways of
11 behaving in the BLM land. We have used the BLM land to
12 park our motor home, take our horse trailer in, the
13 corrals, and up and down all the way from Canada to
14 Mexico, and it works out very well. I guess more
15 signage is what I'm looking for to identify where we
16 should be. Thanks.

17 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. And I'll speak out
18 of turn here a bit. Anybody that's interested in
19 volunteering, see Dallas, the guy at the end of the
20 table at the end of the meeting. Thank you.

21 Cindy Burrascano followed by Phil Pryde.

22 MS. BURRASCANO: Cindy, C-I-N-D-Y,
23 B-U-R-R-A-S-C-A-N-O.

24 And I would like the management plan to
25 address elimination of Bromus tectorum, or

1 non-cheatgrass and Borrego Springs has a problem with
2 it.

3 There are biological controls that have been
4 introduced in other areas that haven't worked so well
5 in warmer parts of the desert. And it's my
6 understanding that they have since gone back and
7 collected additional organisms that are being tested,
8 and I would like you to do whatever you can to help
9 that process happen to get some control on the
10 tamarisks.

11 I would request that you examine the fencing
12 of our riparian areas and grazing allotments and even
13 exposures of rare plant species and seasonal grazing
14 allotments if appropriate. I would like management
15 time lines for monitoring sensitive plants species,
16 particularly in grazing allotments in open route areas
17 where there would likely be more impacts.

18 I would like management to improve status of
19 the sensitive plant species. And I don't know how you
20 would address it, but when you have an increase in
21 illegal alien traffic in an area, you have an increase
22 in the fire frequency, and something needs to be done
23 about that or you convert habitat to fields of weeds.
24 Thank you.

25 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

1 At this point we have two more people that
2 have submitted requests to speak, so if anybody would
3 like to fill out a green card to speak, please do so
4 and we'll follow up with that. Next is Phil Pryde and
5 following Phil will be Mike Brewster.

6 MR. PRYDE: Good evening. My name is Phil
7 Pryde, P-R-Y-D-E. I'm representing San Diego Audubon
8 Society. And my comments will be brief. Most people
9 have probably covered the main points. As you probably
10 are aware, San Diego County is one of the most diverse
11 counties in terms of wildlife and habitat in the
12 country, arguably the most diverse. And I would
13 encourage you to keep that in mind. Keep it central in
14 doing the planning for this area.

15 And two specific comments. One, I'm sure
16 you're going to do this, but do the planning keeping in
17 mind adjacent land uses and areas such as Borrego State
18 Park and so forth and make whatever uses that you
19 recommend palatable with the uses in the surrounding
20 areas, particularly the state park.

21 And secondly, I'm sure you'll do this also,
22 be sure that you take into account corridors, wildlife
23 migration patterns, and so forth in planning the land
24 use also. And do whatever recommendations are needed
25 to take into account migration to keep sheep migration

1 open and so forth and not cut off.

2 I also notice on your maps there, there is a
3 map of mining claims, and I hope that BLM has both the
4 personnel and the funding to check on the credibility
5 of those mining claims. I say that because I have
6 personal experience in land that I helped manage which
7 is adjacent BLM land, or used to be, it's been turned
8 over to other organizations now, but there were mining
9 claims on BLM land there which have been there for
10 many, many years, and when it came time to actually
11 look into them, they were found to have no validity at
12 all.

13 So I hope you will be able to check out
14 mining claims in this area as well and be sure that
15 they are at least -- there are minerals there and which
16 the case I'm referring to were not. Thank you very
17 much.

18 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Okay. I have two
19 more cards. Mike Brewster and Terry Weiner.

20 MR. BREWSTER: Good evening. Sir, the
21 concern I have with your active plan is --

22 MR. JOHNSON: Could you spell your name,
23 please.

24 MR. BREWSTER: That's right, I'm sorry. Mike
25 Brewster, B-R-E-W-S-T-E-R.

1 I'm concerned with the preservation of the
2 natural condition and back country and wilderness
3 character of the BLM land. I'm an environmental
4 planner with Caltrans. And just as with the increasing
5 population, which is increasing dramatically and will
6 continue to for the foreseeable future, everybody knows
7 that the freeways have become more congested and the
8 same applies as well to roads and trails on BLM land as
9 our population increases. I would ask you to consider
10 that if you're using a 1980 or '81 road plan, to
11 consider the impacts that a 2004 population will have
12 using those same roads. My inclination will be that it
13 will be a much greater problem if the amount of trails
14 and roads are not increased.

15 I guess that's really the point I wanted to
16 make, to keep in mind population growth and what that
17 means in terms of access and what you want to open or
18 close. Thank you.

19 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. And Terry Weiner.

20 MS. WEINER: My name is Terry Weiner,
21 T-E-R-R-Y, W-E-I-N-E-R. I'm speaking tonight as a
22 member of the Desert Protective Council. I would like
23 to start with the cultural ACEC, which is Table
24 Mountain, and emphasize the point that a couple of
25 other people made, that there are a lot of cultural

1 resources up there and including the fact that it's a
2 sacred area to the Indians, Native Americans of various
3 tribes, and in order to protect those cultural
4 resources, I would like to see this management plan
5 address just how you're going to go about that. And
6 one of the ways I would suggest is by minimizing the
7 number of routes in that area. And in fact, in any
8 area of this management unit that has cultural
9 resources, I think that the traffic, road traffic,
10 should be minimized.

11 I'd like to see this new management plan have
12 a list of the agencies and individuals who have been
13 sent invitations to participate in this scoping
14 process.

15 As far as the grazing allotments and the
16 wilderness study areas and the other sensitive areas, I
17 know that there's a process for closing those out, but
18 I think that those should be prioritized for, you know,
19 review and EAs should be done before any other areas
20 are looked at.

21 And before you do that system of route
22 designations, we would appreciate it if you would
23 publish, publish the route inventory that you now have.
24 Most of us haven't seen one. We don't know what
25 you're -- what's on the ground and what you're planning

1 to designate it. But before you publish it as part of
2 the document, we would like to see a preliminary
3 publication of this route inventory in time for public
4 comment on that.

5 In addition to coming up with a plan for
6 managing invasive species, I'd like to see a survey and
7 mapping of where the populations of these species are.

8 And also, I think this point has been made,
9 but we would like to see a consultation with the Fish
10 and Wildlife service and the whole management unit
11 before, before you finalize the plan.

12 And I'm a little confused about the
13 introduction I read to the 1981 management plan which
14 said that California Desert Conservation Area Plan
15 formally approved by the Secretary of Interior in
16 December of 1980 established the procedure by which the
17 Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit would eventually
18 be proposed for addition to the CDCA. So this new plan
19 needs to address and inform the public as to how the
20 area has been or will be added to the CDCA and how the
21 plan will be reconciled with the CDCA guidelines.

22 I think this -- the old plan mentions that
23 there were like 170 acres total of riparian area in the
24 whole management unit. Since this is a very important
25 area for endangered species and riparian areas are

1 becoming fewer and farther between in the San Diego
2 County, we would like to have this plan address how
3 all, every single acre of this riparian system, from
4 the high country to the low country, would be protected
5 and how the wildlife populations will be increased. It
6 mentioned in the old plan that the populations in these
7 riparian areas were only 10 to 20 percent of what they
8 could be, and we would like to see them be able to
9 flourish again.

10 The old plan made reference to, page 13, some
11 inholdings of nonfederal land. And it says that
12 acquisition of numerous private inholdings is desirable
13 to aid in the protection of wildlife and archeological
14 resources and to facilitate grazing the recreation
15 programs, so we would these plans to say which of these
16 inholdings have been acquired and which ones will be
17 acquired.

18 And on the other hand, this page 13 makes
19 reference to disposing of small isolated parcels of
20 public land which cannot be officially managed by the
21 BLM and which ones are those and what has been their
22 disposition.

23 Thank you very much for coming all the way
24 from El Centro and further places and hearing this
25 tonight.

1 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

2 I would like to make a few comments. One
3 is -- I really appreciate -- we had some very specific
4 thoughts tonight. Obviously, a number of you are quite
5 familiar with the area and had a lot of good ideas, and
6 we encourage you to stick with this throughout the
7 planning process. One of you mentioned it will
8 probably take a while, and it's true, these things do
9 take sometimes a number of years, so it's really
10 encouraging what we heard tonight and I appreciate
11 that.

12 A couple follow-up items. One, we were able
13 to make copies of the announcement that has the address
14 where to mail in or e-mail in your comments. These are
15 where -- do you want to raise your hand and Valerie can
16 bring them to you? Or just maybe just put them out
17 there on the table would be fine, if you want to pick
18 them up on the way out.

19 Also, this is only one of many ways that you
20 can comment and participate. And whether you speak
21 tonight, whether you hand in comments on one of these
22 green sheets, whether you send an e-mail, whether you
23 send a letter, it's all going to be given equal
24 consideration, so we would encourage you, or if you
25 know of others that cannot be here tonight for whatever

1 reason, to submit your comments. And once again, the
2 scoping period ends on October 12th, so you still have
3 about a month to do that.

4 We'll ask one last time if anybody else would
5 like to submit a green speaker card, because we have
6 come to the end of ones that have been submitted so
7 far.

8 MS. BURRASCANO: I would like to make one
9 comment. I would ask that you not use the Holland
10 plant community descriptions, but the Department of
11 Fish and Game has been working very hard to create a
12 series definition for habitat and that you utilize
13 that, they have done a lot of surveying and desert
14 areas and dry areas that should enable you to use their
15 system. Thank you.

16 MS. ELSER: Could you state your name so it
17 would be on the transcript, please.

18 MS. BURRASCANO: Cindy Burrascano.

19 MR. JOHNSON: Last call. And once again, as
20 Lynette said, if you will please say your name and spell
21 it.

22 MS. MARSDEN: My name is Kim Marsden. I work
23 for California State Parks. K-I-M, M-A-R-S-D-E-N. I
24 have one more comment to make in regard to adjacent
25 land ownership and maybe trying to develop some kind of

1 cooperative management of areas where we anastomose for
2 BLM. That's it. Thank you.

3 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. We are -- we did finish a
4 little bit ahead so that certainly, as we said, we'll be
5 around if anybody would like to talk one-on-one, look at
6 the maps a little bit more, but thanks again for your
7 participation tonight. And this is just a start. So I
8 hope you'll stick with us. Thanks.

9 (Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.)

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